

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 5165

BEIRUT PASS USINT BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: IN, IR, PFOR

SUBJECT: IRANIAN-INDIAN RELATIONS: VISIT TO TEHRAN OF INDIAN
FOREIGN MINISTER SWARAN SINGH

REF: TEHRAN 5043

SUMMARY: WE HAVE CONFLICTING EVIDENCE RE SUCCESS OF JUST CONCLUDED
VISIT TO TEHRAN OF INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SWARAN SINGH. MOST MEDIA
COVERAGE SUGGESTS THAT HE SUCCEEDED IN MUTING IRANIAN SUSPICIONS OF
INDIAN INTENTIONS, BUT ARTICLE BY LEADING IRANIAN POLITICAL COM-
MENTATOR INDICATES THAT LATENT IRANIAN MISTRUST OF INDIA REMAINS.
HOWEVER, VISIT MUST ON BALANCE BE RECKONED AS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT
IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THAT TWO RISING REGIONAL POWERS ARE
TALKING DIRECTLY TO EACH OTHER. END SUMMARY

1. INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SWARAN SINGH ON JULY 22 CONCLUDED
A THREE-DAY VISIT TO TEHRAN AMID CONFLICTING SIGNS ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS
OF VISIT. MOST OF MEDIA COVERAGE AND OUTWARD INDICATIONS POINT TO
CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS FOR SINGH. HE TALKED TO THE SHAH, FOREIGN
MINISTER KHALATBARI, NATIONAL IRANIAN OIL COMPANY CHAIRMAN MANUCHEHR
EQBAL, AND FINANCE MINISTER JAMSHID AMUZEGAR. DURING FINAL FULL DAY
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OF VISIT HEADLINE IN MAJOR TEHRAN NEWSPAPER PROCLAIMED INTENTIONS OF

IRAN AND INDIA TO WORK TOGETHER FOR PEACE. AT SAME TIME, FOREIGN
MINISTRY'S DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS (ASIA AND AFRICA)
SOLTAN-HOSSEIN SANANDAJI SAID SINGH VISIT WAS A FAVORABLE DEVELOPMENT
M

2. SANANDAJI DESCRIBED SINGH AS HAVING WORKED VERY HARD TO REASSURE
IRAN. INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER HAD VOWED THAT INDIA WOULD NOT DO THE
BIDDING OF THE SOVIET UNION, NEITHER IN PAKISTAN NOR IN IRAQ. SINGH
SAID INDIA HAD NOT SHAKEN OFF BRITISH COLONIAL RULE TO PERMIT ITSELF
TO COME UNDER SOVIET INFLUENCE. HE REPRESENTED INDIA AS BEING STRONG
POLITICALLY AND MILITARILY WITH THE CAPABILITY OF MANUFACTURING MUCH
OF
ITS OWN MILITARY EQUIPMENT. NO COUNTRY EVEN IN THE SUPER-POWER
CATEGORY
HAD THE STRENGTH TO IMPOSE ITS WILL ON INDIA.

3. SINGH EXPLICITLY DENIED ANY INDIAN INTENTION OF SUBVERTING PAKISTAN.

ON THE CONTRARY, THE BREAKUP OF PAKISTAN WOULD ENDANGER INDIA'S
SECURITY. INDIA WOULD LEND NO SUPPORT TO ANY MOVE TO SUBVERT
PAKISTAN AND DISAVOWED ANY INDIAN SUPPORT, PAST OR FUTURE, TO THE
BALUCHIS OR TO THE PUSHTOONS.

4. SINGH EXPLAINED INDIA'S TIES WITH IRAQ AS STANDING ON THEIR OWN
MERIT AND NOT AS DIRECTED IN ANY SENSE AGAINST IRAN. COMMERCIAL
RELATIONS AND ESPECIALLY OIL FIGURED HEAVILY IN INDIAN TIES WITH
IRAQ. INDIA OPPOSED SUBVERSIVE ACTIONS BY IRAQ IN THE PERSIAN GULF
OR ELSEWHERE AND SINGH DISAVOWED ANY INDIAN CONNECTION WITH WHAT HE
TERMED "IRRESPONSIBLE" IRAQI ACTIONS IN PAKISTAN.

5. WHILE SANANDAJI SAID THAT SINGH HAD MADE EVERY APPARENT EFFORT
TO REASSURE IRAN, HE HAD NOT BEEN AS HELPFUL WITH RESPECT TO RELATIONS

BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH. IN RESPONSE TO IRAN'S REQUESTS THAT
INDIA USE ITS INFLUENCE TO INDUCE A GREATER FLEXIBILITY BY BANGLADESH

ON SUCH ISSUES AS THE PAKISTANI PRISONERS OF WAR, SINGH PROTESTED THAT

INDIA HAD NO INFLUENCE OVER BANGLADESH PRIME MINISTER SHEK HUSSEIN
UR-RAHMAN. THE LATTER TENDED TO BE RESENTFUL OF INDIA'S ADVICE WHICH
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MEANT THAT INDIA HAD TO EXERCISE GREAT CARE TO AVOID APPEARING TO BE
PUSHING Dacca. SANANDAJI CONCLUDED ON THE NOTE THAT IRAN HOPED IT
COULD
DEPEND ON WHAT SINGH HAD SAID, BUT ONE WOULD HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE.

6. IRAN'S CONTINUING SUSPICIONS OF INDIA WHICH CONTINUE DESPITE THE
SINGH VISIT ARE SUMMED UP IN ARTICLE BY LEADING IRANIAN POLITICAL
JOURNALIST AMIR TAHERI APPEARING IN PROMINENT DAILY KAYHAN INTERNA-

TIONAL. EVER THE GOOD JOURNALIST, TAHERI ADEQUATELY COVERS POSITIONS TAKEN BY SWARAN SINGH IN THEIR INTERVIEW. HOWEVER, AFTER EACH EXPOSITON BY SINGH OF IDIA'S VIEWS AND POLICIES, TAHERI TOOK PAINS TO EMPHASIZE THE CONTRADICTONS IN SINGH'S STATEMENTS, AT LEAST AS SEEN FROM TEHRAN. QUESTION NATURALLY OCCURS OF WHETHER TAHERI ARTICLE WAS OFFICIALLY INSPIRED.

7. COMMENT: IN SPITE OF CONFLICTING EVIDENCE ON HOW MUCH SUCCESS SWARAN SINGH'S VISIT ACHIEVED, WE VIEW IT ON BALANCE AS A SUCCESS. AT LEAST THE TWO SIDES ARE TALKING DIRECTLY TO ONE ANOTHER RATHER THAN MAKING COMPLAINTS THROUGH THIRD PARTIES. A CONTINUATION OF DIRECT CO TACTS COULD OVER TIME CONTRIBUTE TO A BETTER ATMOSPHERE BUT MUTUAL SUSPICIONS BETWEEN THE TWO RISING AREA POWERS ARE UNLIKELY TO BE DISSIPATED EASILY.
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